

Alfred W. McCune House
200 N. Main St.
Salt Lake City
Salt Lake County
Utah

HABS No. UT-87

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ALFRED W. McCUNE HOUSE

HABS No. UT-87

Location: 200 North Main Street, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah.

Present Owner: McCune Associates.

Present Occupant: Various professional firms.

Significance: The McCune House is one of the grandest Salt Lake City residences, built by a railroad and mining magnate. The three-story, twenty-one-room structure and adjacent carriage house occupy a hill site not far from the city's Temple Square.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1901.
2. Architect: S. C. Dallas, Salt Lake City architect. Little is known about the life of this architect. Dallas is first listed as an architect, in partnership with William C. Hedges, in the Salt Lake City Directory of 1890. Hedges was a draftsman and also was listed as a U.S. Surveyor-General. After 1891, Dallas is listed as an architect without Hedges. Mrs. McCune selected Dallas as the architect for the mansion and she generously provided the means for him to travel around the country for two years before selecting a suitable style. The architect finally settled on copying much of the John H. Matthews residence at 90th Street and Riverside Drive, New York City. The McCune House is undoubtedly Dallas's most significant commission.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The McCune House is built on part of lot 3 and lots 4 and 5, Block 2, and the carriage house is built on lot 3, Block 3, Plat E of the Salt Lake City Survey. The following references to the title of these lots are found in the Salt Lake County Recorder's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah:
 - 1899 Deed, signed April 27, 1899, filed May 12, 1899, recorded in Book 5J, pp. 246-247. Lewis Kelsey and John A. Croesbeck, Jr., to Elizabeth A. McCune, all of lot 5, for \$2,200.
 - 1899 Deed, signed April 28, 1899, filed May 12, 1899, recorded in Book 5Q, page 284. John E. Dooly and wife, Mary V., to Elizabeth A. McCune, lot 4, Block 2, and lot 3, Block 3, for \$14,000.

- 1899 Deed, signed September 5, 1899, filed September 11, 1899, recorded in Book 5P, page 398. Henry J. Faust, Jr., to Elizabeth A. McCune, part of lot 3, Block 2, for \$2,250.
- 1920 Deed, signed October 21, 1920, filed December 1, 1920, recorded in Book 11G, page 84. Alfred W. McCune and his wife, Elizabeth A., to Heber J. Grant, Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, part of lot 3, lots 4 and 5, Block 2, and lot 3, Block 3, for \$1.
- 1973 Deed, signed March 20, 1973, filed November 14, 1973, recorded in Book 3459, page 138. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Corporation of the President, to Werner Weixler and wife, Dorothy, part of lot 3, lots 4 and 5, Block 2, and lot 3, Block 3, for "\$10, etc."
- 1973 Deed, signed November 5, 1973, filed November 14, 1973, recorded in Book 3459, page 140. Werner Weixler and wife, Dorothy, to McCune Associates, part of lot 3, lots 4 and 5, Block 2, and lot 3, Block 3, for "\$10, etc."
4. Original plans, construction: The architect was greatly inspired by the John H. Matthews residence at 90th Street and Riverside Drive, New York City. A photograph of the New York City structure is in a Utah collection and indicates an almost direct copying of the architectural massing and detailing. Its construction process and visual description was provided by the architect and quoted in Gates, Memorial to Elizabeth Claridge McCune, Salt Lake City, 1924.
5. Artist: The artist responsible for painting the ceilings of the ballroom was James Wall Finn, a New York City artist. Finn received an honorable mention in the Paris Salon of 1896 and a Bronze Medal in the Pan American Exposition of 1901 in Buffalo, New York, (American Art Annual, 1898; Dictionary of American Artists, Sculptors, and Engravers, 1968).
- Finn's work in the ballroom is dated 1902. He may have painted the ceilings of rooms on the first floor; however, they are not signed or dated. The subject matter of the ballroom paintings includes putti surrounding a nude female figure in the center of the eastern half of the room. The western portion of the room contains four dancing women, muses or perhaps gypsies, each holding a musical instrument.
6. Alterations and additions: After the McCune House became the property of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1920, it served as the headquarters for the McCune School of Music and Art. In 1958 it became the Salt Lake Center for Brigham Young

University. No major alterations with the exception of some semi-permanent partitions were added to the building. These have since been removed by the present owners in the effort to restore the mansion. One of the present owners, Werner Weixler, claims that a member of the McCune family did remove some of the original lighting fixtures and some stained glass to be installed in a private residence in Heber, Utah.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Alfred W. McCune (1849-1927), a Mormon convert and the son of a British Army officer, immigrated with his parents to Nephi, Utah, in 1857. While still living in Nephi he began contracting to build railroads in Utah. Highly successful during the 1870s and '80s, first in a partnership and later on his own, he continued to build railroads throughout the Intermountain West. In the 1890s his interests turned to mining, first in British Columbia, then in Utah and Montana and in the early 1900s in Peru.

In 1888 the McCune family became residents of Salt Lake City, residing in a house they purchased on 2nd West and South Temple. A decade later, after returning from a tour of Europe, they rented the famous Gardo House (built for Brigham Young and intended as the official residence of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church). While living in Salt Lake City, McCune shared a controlling interest with Mormon Church President Joseph F. Smith in the Utah Light and Railway Company. He was also involved with the development of the Consolidated Railway and Power Company.

In the fall of 1898, McCune was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate in a hotly contended race that resulted in a failure of the Joint Assembly to elect a United States Senator due to its dissolution.

In 1901, McCune moved his family into the mansion at 200 North Main Street. They lived there for nearly twenty years while McCune continued to pursue his varied mining and railroad interests. By 1920 all of the family's nine children were married and the McCunes decided to move to a more comfortable climate in Los Angeles, California.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Early views in the Photograph Collection of the Utah State Historical Society:

View of the west side of the McCune House looking east across Main Street.

View of the John H. Matthews House at 90th Street and Riverside Drive, New York City.

2. Interview: Werner Weixler, September 5, 1974, Salt Lake City.
3. Bibliography:

Arrington, Leonard J. Creat Basin Kingdom. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Benezit, E. Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs. Vol. III. Paris: Librairie Grund, 1950.

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Whitney, Orson F. History of Utah. Vol. III (Biographical). Salt Lake City, Utah: n.p., 1904.

Winkler, Franz J. "Building in Salt Lake City," Architectural Record. July, 1907, pp. 15-37.

Young, William. A Dictionary of American Artists, Sculptors, and Engravers. Cambridge, Mass.: William Young and Company, 1968.

Prepared by: Peter L. Coss
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building combines the shingle and Queen Anne styles with eaves showing an oriental flare.
2. Condition of fabric: excellent interior, good exterior.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 91'-6" x 91'-3".
2. Foundations: red sandstone.
3. Walls: red brick with red sandstone belt courses, lintels and sills.
4. Structural system, framing: masonry bearing wall with wood framing and rafter system.
5. Porches: One-story porch across south front extends to half of east side. Southwest end of porch culminates in a circular porte cochere. The porch has granite Corinthian columns on a sandstone base, terrazzo flooring, and a modillioned and denticulated cornice. The second-story porch, above the first-story one, is not as long or as deep.
6. Chimneys: seven brick chimneys, highly ornamented.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: front entrance has cast-iron grillage with leaf pattern and falcon-head design. Recessed front door with sidelights.
 - b. Windows and shutters: windows have double-hung sash with a few exceptions. Leaded stained-glass windows in several places.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Essentially a cross gable roof covered with tile. Modillioned cornice.
 - b. Dormers: Dormer on north side is covered with tile, has gable roof. Chimney divides the two leaded windows.
 - c. Towers: Fat tower on east side and thinner tower on southwest corner both have conical, tile-covered roofs.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: See plans. Generally, the servants' wing is in the northeast, the public rooms are on the first and third floors, and the private family rooms are on the second floor.

2. Stairways: central stairs have oak construction, including elaborate newell post and torch and scroll balusters. Alcove in stairwell might be musicians' balcony.

Servants' stair is constructed of oak balusters and handrail, open on one side. In the northeast corner of stairwell is a dumbwaiter from the first to the third floor.

3. Flooring: 2" wide oak flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster with oak and cherry wainscoting and paneling. The dining room has tapestry on the walls and paintings over the doorways. The ballroom has marble pilasters and the banquet room has paintings on the walls.

The ceilings are equally elaborate. The ceiling of the main hall has decorative beams and paintings. The reception room ceiling has bas relief plaster figures and the dining room ceiling has elaborate plasterwork and paintings. The ballroom ceiling has plasterwork and paintings. Many of the rooms have cove cornices as well.

5. Doorways and doors: oak jambs and casings, accommodating both swinging and sliding doors. Stile and rail doors have six panels.
6. Trim: oak and cherry.
7. Hardware: mortise passage and lock sets with levers or knobs and beautiful brass escutcheons.
8. Lighting: a combination of wall and ceiling fixtures.
9. Heating: boiler with radiators. Air ducts carried from basement to third floor.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: the house faces south on a steep site, with a dramatic flight of stairs. The driveway surrounds the building. The carriage house is located on the northeast corner of the property.
2. Carriage House: Access to the carriage house was not permitted.

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November, 1974

III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The State of Utah survey, conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey, was cosponsored by the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation and supported by the Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts jointly with the National Endowment for the Arts. All work was recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, during the summer of 1974 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office at the Graduate School of Architecture, University of Utah. The survey team consisted of Burtch W. Beall, Jr., architect (University of Utah), project supervisor; Dr. Peter L. Goss, project historian; student architects Ronnie B. Cullen (Washington State University), Glayton B. Fraser (University of Tennessee), William B. Klein (University of Utah), and Eric V. Ramsing (University of Oregon). Photographs were taken by Louise T. Taft in 1985. The written data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in 1985.

ADDENDUM TO
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